OTHER NOTICES

Barnett, Anthony. *The Human Species.* Harmondsworth, 1957. Penguin Books. Pp. xiii + 351. Price 5s.

Hutton, Kenneth. *Chemistry and the Conquest of Materials.* Harmondsworth, 1957. Penguin Books. Pp. xi + 228. Price 3s. 6d.

THE Penguin Book publishers are performing an outstanding public service in producing a series of good popular books on different branches of science and medicine. Two of the most recent have been written by members of the *Eugenics Society*. The first, by Barnett, is directly related to eugenics, the second, by Hutton, deals with many topics such as chemicals in the control of disease and chemicals in contraception which are relevant to eugenics.

Dr. Barnett, lecturer in Zoology in Glasgow, has covered an astonishingly wide range of human biology. This is all the more remarkable as he has apparently had no professional experience of men and women except as a teacher of university students, a gifted minority. Part One of his book is on heredity and reproduction. Part Two includes an outline of physical anthropology, psychology, sex differences and eugenics. Part Three is on nutrition, world food resources, epidemiology and population.

The book is clearly and interestingly written and very well illustrated. It is up-to-date and in places perhaps the author is not sufficiently critical of modern views. The theses of Margaret Mead and Bowlby are presented without comment. The prevalent view that fertility is greatest at an intelligence level near the mean of the population is given without mention of the evidence from several countries that there are two peaks of fertility for intelligence, as estimated from social class, one at the upper extreme, and one well below the average of the population. Intelligence tests on children aged five or six are said to have virtually no predictive value at all. The relationship between mental defect in parent and child is oversimplified. Environmental explanations are given greater weight than genetic ones for phenomena where both nature and nurture are concerned. For example the higher average intelligence of negroes in the northern states than of whites in the southern states of the U.S.A. is attributed to education rather than selective migration; but both theories are stated. In the five pages on eugenics the section on diseases of man inherited according to simple Mendelian pattern is well done, but no mention is made of the eugenic possibilities of detecting those heterozygous for genes causing severe handicap in homozygotes. Positive eugenics is considered only in two paragraphs with a quotation from Plato; all the same the author finds nothing absurd in the idea of the planned breeding of human beings.

Dr. Hutton, headmaster of the secondary technical school at Hatfield, is dealing with a more exact and so less controversial science. His book, too, is well-written and well-illustrated and most successfully introduces the reader first to chemical concepts and notation, and second to the many ways in which modern life is dependent on applied chemistry. In the second part of the book there are sections on synthetic textiles such as nylon and terylene, chemicals used in medicine, such as anæsthetics, disinfectants, bacteriostatics and radioactive tracers, on chemicals used in industry, such as the heavy metals and on chemicals used in agriculture such as fertilisers and insecticides.

C. O. C.

Gruneberg, H. *An Annotated Catalogue of the Mutant Genes of the House Mouse.* Medical Research Council Memorandum No. 33. London, 1956. H.M.S.O. Pp. v + 28. Price 2s. 6d.

SOME 110 genetically determined syndromes are now known in the mouse. Only a few of these closely resemble disorders found in humans. But their embryology and genetics are much more readily investigated and will increasingly provide suggestions for work on the aetiology of human malformations and disease. In this pamphlet Professor Grüneberg, F.R.S., Director of the newly formed Medical Research Council's Group for Experimental Research in Inherited Diseases has listed these mouse syndromes and given a short description of each of them. These descriptions are valuable, since the names given to the conditions, such as "Pucky," "Zigzag," "Jimpy," "Kreisler," will convey little to the medical practitioner searching for parallels to a human disorder.

C. O. C.

The Smithsonian Report for 1955:

Smyth, Henry D. (Editor). *The Development of Nuclear Power for Peaceful Purposes.*

A TALK given before the American Institute of Chemical Engineers in 1954 describes the results of the previous five years' work, the present situation and the proposed programme for the five years to follow. Economy, both in construction costs and running costs, appears to be the main consideration and it is impossible for the question yet to be answered whether a power-producing uranium reactor can be built which will compete with older forms of power production. C. W. U.

Stamp, L. Dudley (Editor). *International Geographical Union: Report of a Symposium held at Makerere College, September 1955.* London, 1956. Geographical Publications Ltd. Pp. 104. Price 5s.

THE International Geographical Union was formed in 1924 but International Geographical Congresses have been held at intervals since 1871. This Report, after a foreword by Dr. L. Dudley Stamp, C.B.E., President of the Union, prints twenty-one contributions to the 1955 Symposium which dealt specifically with "Natural Resources, Food and Population in Inter-Tropical Africa." Of particular interest is an outline of the work done on the World Land Use Survey: in 1949 the Lisbon Congress appointed a Commission to examine the possibility of carrying out a world-wide survey or inventory of land use; a scheme of land use categories was drawn up and emphasis was laid on the necessity of using a master key of universal application, and the publication of maps on the only scale for which complete world coverage exists. The symposium touches on the application of this scheme to various countries in Inter-Tropical Africa.

K. H.